

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 03469 211612Z

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S E C R E T MADRID 3469

EXDIS

ANKARA FOR THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SP, OVIP (FORD, GERALD)

SUBJ: MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER ARIAS: PRESIDENT'S VISIT

REF: STATE 116956

1. I MET FOR OVER AN HOUR ALONE WITH PRIME MINISTER ARIAS ON MAY 20 TO REVIEW WITH HIM THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT'S PERCEPTION OF THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT AND OF THE TOPICS WHICH MIGHT BE DISCUSSED.

2. AT THE OUTSET, I WENT OVER WITH ARIAS THE POINTS CONTAINED IN PARAS 2 AND 3 OF REFTTEL. AIRAS EXPRESSED GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH THOSE VIEWS. HE SAID HE SAW THIS VISIT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO SET FORTH SPAIN'S OWN PERCEPTION OF ITS POSITION AND ROLE IN LIGHT OF PROBLEMS POSED BY PORTUGAL, MOROCCO AND OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, AND TO EXPLAIN THE PROCESS OF THE POLITICAL EVOLUTION SPAIN IS EMBARKING UPON TO ASSURE POLITICAL STABILITY IN THE FUTURE. IN THIS CONTEXT, THE VISIT ALSO PROVIDED AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO CONSULT ON BROAD RANGE OF US-SPANISH INTERESTS, INCLUDING US-SPANISH DEFENSE COOPERATION.

3. ARIAS THEN WENT ON TO DESCRIBE AT SOME LENGTH HIS CONCERNS OVER THE EFFECTS OF THE PORTUGUESE SITUATION ON SPAIN. THE GOS HAS CONCLUDED THAT PORTUGAL WAS NOW VIRTUALLY UNDER
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MADRID 03469 211612Z

COMMUNIST CONTROL AND THAT EFFORTS WOULD BE INCREASINGLY MADE

TO EXPORT THIS FORM OF REVOLUTION TO SPAIN. WITH ITS LONG FRONTIER WITH PORTUGAL, SPAIN WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY IN PROTECTING ITSELF FROM PORTUGUESE SUBVERSIVE ACTION. WITH RESPECT TO FRANCE, SPAIN HAD INCREASING PROBLEMS OVER FRENCH INABILITY OR UNWILLINGNESS TO ASSIST THE GOS IN CONTROLLING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BASQUE TERRORIST ORGANIZATION (ETA); THIS WAS AN IRRITANT IN RELATIONSHIP WITH FRANCE. ITALY TO THE EAST WAS ITS USUAL UNSTABLE SELF, WHILE TO THE SOUTH, THE MOROCCAN ATTITUDE TOWARD THE SPANISH SAHARA POSED SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR SPAIN. ARIAS DESCRIBED THE SPANISH POLICY TOWARD THE SAHARA MUCH ALONG THE LINES WHICH CORTINA HAD SET FORTH TO ME THE PREVIOUS DAY (MADRID'S 3439). ARIAS ALSO ALLUDED IN GENERAL TERMS TO THE RESERVED OR UNFRIENDLY ATTITUDE OF OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TOWARD FRANCO SPAIN.

4. ARIAS SAID THAT WITH FRANCO NOW IN HIS 83RD YEAR, IT WAS ONLY A QUESTION OF TIME BEFORE CHANGES TOOK PLACE HERE. SPAIN MUST DO EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TO REMAIN A STABLE POLITICAL ELEMENT. THIS MEANT THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNAL POLICIES WHICH WOULD ASSURE A PEACEFUL TRANSITION INTO THE POST-FRANCO ERA AND A FOREIGN POLICY WHICH WOULD PROTECT IT FROM EXTERNAL AGGRESSION.

5. WITH RESPECT TO INTERNAL QUESTIONS, ARIAS SAID THAT HE WAS DETERMINED TO FOLLOW THE EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS ON WHICH HE HAD EMBARKED, BUT IT HAD TO BE DONE AT THE RIGHT PACE IF IT WERE TO BE SUCCESSFUL. HIS POLICY WAS ALREADY UNDER ATTACK BY EXTREME RIGHT ELEMENTS, BUT HE WAS DETERMINED TO PURSUE IT. HE WAS SURE IN HIS OWN MIND THAT THE TRANSITION FROM FRANCO TO PRINCE JUAN CARLOS (WHENEVER FRANCO SHOULD LEAVE THE SCENE) COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED IN AN ORDERLY AND PEACEFUL WAY. ARIAS SAID HE THOUGHT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE PRESIDENT BE FULLY INFORMED ON WHAT THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT WAS TRYING TO DO WITH RESPECT TO THIS EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS.

6. WITH REGARD TO US-SPANISH RELATIONSHIPS, ARIAS MADE CLEAR THAT SPAIN DESIRED A RENEWAL OF US-SPANISH DEFENSE COOPERATION SINCE IT WAS CLEARLY IN THE MUTUAL INTERESTS OF BOTH COUNTRIES TO HAVE SUCH A RELATIONSHIP. HE AGREED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE DESIREABLE TO GO INTO SPECIFIC NEGOTIATING

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 MADRID 03469 211612Z

DETAILS DURING THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT, BUT THOUGHT THAT THE PRESIDENT AND FRANCO COULD DEVELOP CERTAIN GUIDELINES FOR THE NEGOTIATORS WHICH WOULD PROVIDE THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF AN AGREEMENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE. ARIAS' ONLY COMMENT WITH RESPECT TO WHAT THE SPANISH WOULD LOOK FOR IN THE NEGOTIATIONS CAME INDIRECTLY WHEN HE TOLD ME THAT WITHIN THE PAST DAY OR SO, HE HAD MET WITH THE THREE SERVICE MINISTERS WHO HAD AGAIN PRESSED HARD TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT WITH

WHICH TO MODERNIZE THE SPANISH ARMED FORCES. I POINTED OUT (AS SUGGESTED BY STATE 116552) THAT WHILE WE CONTINUED TO CONSIDER HOW WE WOULD HELP SPAIN MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE DEFENSE CAPABILITY, IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE GOS UNDERSTAND THAT RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO US FOR DEFENSE PURPOSES WERE SEVERELY LIMITED. THEREFORE, IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE GOS NOT RAISE ITS SIGHTS TOO HIGH IN THIS PARTICULAR AREA.

7. I TOLD ARIAS THAT WE THOUGHT THAT IN VIEW OF THE TIME WHICH WOULD BE DEVOTED TO THE BROADER QUESTIONS WHICH WE HAD DISCUSSED, IT MIGHT BE DESIRABLE NOT TO DEAL WITH SOME OF THE MORE DETAILED ECONOMIC QUESTIONS, AS FOR EXAMPLE GSP BENEFITS (PARA 4 REFTEL). ARIAS REPLIED THAT IN HIS VIEW, IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE SPANISH ATTITUDE ON SOME OF THESE QUESTIONS BE SET FORTH SO THAT THERE WOULD BE NO MISUNDERSTANDING ON THEIR POINT OF VIEW. HOWEVER, HE INDICATED THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE MORE THAN A PASSING REFERENCE AND THAT THE GOS WOULD, OF COURSE, NOT EXPECT ANY SPECIFIC REPLY ON OUR PART.

8. COMMENT: ON MAY 19, I HAD ALSO DISCUSSED POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CORTINA WHOSE COMMENTS GENERALLY COINCIDED WITH WHAT ARIAS TOLD ME. THE ONLY DIFFERENCES WERE THAT CORTINA SEEMED TO THINK IT MIGHT BE DESIRABLE TO TOUCH MORE SPECIFICALLY ON THE STATUS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AND TO DISCUSS GENERALLY THE QUIDS AND THE QUOS. HE WAS ALSO PARTICULARLY ATTRACTED TO THE IDEA OF TRYING TO ENLARGE THE SCOPE OF THE AGREEMENT BEYOND JUST THE DEFENSE FIELD TO INCLUDE COOPERATION IN THE TECHNOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC FIELDS. CORTINA INDICATED THAT WHILE HE HAD NO INTENTION OF RAISING OLIVES AND SHOES, HE THOUGH IT MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO MENTION SPANISH VIEWS ON GSP. I ASKED CORTINA WHETHER FRANCO HIMSELF WOULD DEAL WITH THE BROAD RANGE OF US-SPANISH RELATIONS AS WELL AS WITH THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT OF SPAIN'S

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 MADRID 03469 211612Z

PRESENT POSITION. CORTINA SAID HE WAS NOT SURE, BUT HE WOULD BE SEEING FRANCO FOR HIS REGULAR WEEKLY MEETING ON MAY 21 AND WOULD LET ME KNOW SHORTLY THEREAFTER.
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